



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

March 11, 2026

To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Opposition to SB887 Labor and Employment - Greenhouse Workers - Collective Bargaining and Heat Protection**

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in opposition to SB887 Labor and Employment - Greenhouse Workers - Collective Bargaining and Heat Protection. This legislation would impose collective bargaining mandates and new heat-related regulatory requirements on agricultural operations utilizing controlled-environment facilities such as greenhouses. While we strongly support safe working conditions and appreciate the intent to protect agricultural employees, the provisions in this bill create significant operational, financial, and regulatory challenges for Maryland growers who already operate within a highly constrained economic environment.

SB 887 establishes a new collective bargaining framework specifically for greenhouse employers, creating a regulatory system that differs from existing labor structures applied elsewhere in agriculture. Maryland's farmers, particularly those utilizing controlled-environment agriculture, already face steep costs related to energy, inputs, land, compliance, and labor. Imposing a unique and complex bargaining structure on greenhouse operations places these employers at a competitive disadvantage and increases uncertainty across the entire sector. Many of these businesses are small or family-run operations that lack the administrative or financial capacity to manage a formal, state-governed labor negotiation process. This bill may unintentionally push production out of Maryland or discourage future investment in controlled-environment agriculture.

Additionally, the bill creates a new heat-protection mandate requiring paid five-minute rest breaks for each hour that the indoor heat index reaches 90 degrees or more. Farmers share the goal of maintaining safe workplaces and already work diligently to do so, but this one-size-fits-all mandate does not account for the diversity of greenhouse structures, crop systems, automation technologies, or existing safety protocols. Many greenhouse operations employ climate-control technologies designed to manage heat and ventilation effectively, and others rely on crop-specific environments that do not align neatly with the threshold set in the bill. A rigid, hourly mandated break schedule may disrupt crop cycles, reduce productivity, and strain small labor crews, especially during planting and harvesting peaks. Maryland Occupational Safety and Health already have regulatory authority to address heat-related risks under existing law and layering an additional standard solely on greenhouse operations adds complexity and duplication.



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035

410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

In combination, the collective bargaining requirements and the new heat-protection mandates create a regulatory burden that is disproportionate, inflexible, and economically harmful to Maryland's agricultural sector. The Farm Bureau believes that policies intended to support worker safety and fair labor practices should be developed collaboratively, with broad stakeholder input, and with consideration for the diversity and realities of agricultural operations across the state. SB 887, as drafted, does not strike that balance.

For these reasons, the Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully urges an **unfavorable report** on SB 887.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions